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Joe Kintzley's Pension

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fact that he has read *The Atlantic Monthly* ever since the appearance of the first number, and *The New York Tribune* from his boyhood. Such a course of reading—not referring at all to politics—is a “liberal education” in the broadest, highest, most practical sense, and it points the way to paths of knowledge which remain hidden from many a man who climbs high on the ladder of promotion. In view of the fact that it is quite difficult to find writers informed about Iowa and Iowans before and during the Rebellion, we are especially gratified to have secured his most efficient aid in these pages. So far as his other duties will admit, we are glad to have his promise to aid us in the future. If he is spared to write his recollections of pioneer, army and public life, we are not certain that this will not be deemed his best work and his surest guaranty of a place in history, useful and honored as his career has been.

JOE KINTZLEY'S PENSION.

During the past year the American Express Company set a most commendable example in awarding a pension to an employe at Boone who had spent nearly thirty years in its service. The case seems to us a very interesting one—worthy of being made a matter of record in these pages. It shows that fidelity to important trusts—faithfulness in small matters as well as in great—are not always forgotten, even by corporations, and that several gentlemen connected with the American Express Company are endowed with souls, though the organization itself be denied such a possession. Mr. Joseph M. Kintzley—possibly, however, we had better simply call him “Joe,” the name by which he is best known at home and by his employers—emigrated from the State of Indiana with his parents in 1854. The family came through with an ox team and settled in Boonesboro, as it was then known. The boy, who was born in 1840, engaged in all sorts of outdoor work, hauling pottery to Des Moines, Fort Dodge, Webster City and other towns, and worked for a time

about one of the early flouring-mills at Boonesboro, but in the winter of 1864-5 was employed as a messenger by the Express Company. He traveled from the end of the C. & N. W. R. R. west by stage to Sioux City, with occasional trips to Council Bluffs. It is reported that on one occasion the stage was turned over and rolled down hill. Some passenger averred that as the coach started on its wild career "Joe" made a grab for his packages and held them fast until the vehicle brought up below. Fortunately no one was hurt and nothing lost. His route was occasionally varied to other points, as the exigencies of the service required, but his employment was constant, summer and winter, and much of the time day and night. He "staged" awhile from Boone to Des Moines—down one day and back the next. He always rode on the outside of the coach. On one occasion only was an attempt made to rob the stage. This occurred a few miles east of Carroll, but we are unable to indicate the year. However, about 11 P. M., when the full moon was shining brightly, the coach had reached a point where it could not turn around without upsetting, when four men fired upon it, killing two of the horses and wounding the other pair. The driver jumped off his seat, when the lead horses broke from their fastenings and ran off to the residence of John H. Moore, who kept the next stage station, a sort distance further on. All the robbers succeeded in getting was the driver's watch and \$28 in money. The coach was badly riddled by bullets, the harness cut in pieces and two of the horses killed. Two wealthy gentlemen from New York, with a large amount of money, were in the vehicle, but by lying still on the bottom they escaped injury and molestation. Something like \$10,000 was to be sent by this vehicle, but by an accident it remained behind, and so was not endangered by this attempted robbery.

But when the railroad reached the Missouri river, Joe was given a comfortable express car and the old coaches were laid aside. Generally he served as messenger, but he was a man who could be assigned to any duty. There was no detail of express business in which he was not proficient. At times

for a considerable period he kept the local office in Boone. During all these years he had not lost a dollar nor a parcel of property entrusted to his care. In thirty years he had been off duty but fifty-seven days—absence in consequence of the illness or deaths of relatives. His record of faithful, competent work was unbroken. He never married. His habits were steady, temperate. He was frugal, almost miserly, so far as his own personal expenses were concerned, dressing most cheaply. The legend says that for many years he did not even possess an overcoat; but his earnings were freely devoted to relieving the needs of poor relatives—his father, and his brothers and sisters. They looked to him for assistance quite as a matter of course, seeming to deem him capable of bearing almost any burden. Yet he was badly crippled and very lame. In youth a “white swelling” upon one of his knees had sadly shortened and distorted the limb. His kindness of heart was broad enough to take in animals, for he was most humane in his care and treatment of the company’s horses whenever any of them were in his charge. And not only was he a faithful servant of his employers, but those who dealt with him always found him as careful of their interests. He was a marvel of promptness in the delivery of freights, especially of animals and perishable property. His demeanor was such that the poor, limping man made every one who knew him his friend. One of these friends suggested to the writer that instead of placing upon their cards or advertisements the portrait of a bulldog, the express company might better substitute that of Joe Kintzley, as a type of the highest courage, fidelity and vigilance.

But the years wore along—night work and exposure were telling upon him—and last spring Mr. A. J. Barclay and two or three other friends in Boone thought that Joe was failing under the strain resting upon him, that he was, really, almost worn out. They called the attention of the Express Company to the fact, and an Assistant Superintendent was sent to Boone to investigate the case. The officials seemed to be aware that they had a very good man at Boone, but so long as everything

went well no especial attention was paid to him. The visiting official looked the matter up very thoroughly. He found that all we have set forth was true, and that Joe had even expended \$400 of his own money in supplying the office with fuel, besides keeping it in repair at his own expense. But there were at least two dozen letters from the Company to "Joe" which had not been opened, much less answered. "Why this neglect?" "Simply," said Joe, "because I am overworked and tired out, and have not had time to open and read them." Possibly, from their appearance, he may have known they were not important. All necessary business had been carefully attended to.

This Superintendent was so impressed with Joe's statements, so pleased with the high commendation bestowed upon him by the good people of Boone, that he relieved him from duty at once, refunded the money he had expended in the Company's service, and recommended that the faithful man should be allowed a pension of \$36 per month to the end of his life. This recommendation was immediately carried into effect at headquarters, and at this writing (Jan. 8, 1894) Joe has been several months in receipt of his pension. One effect of this beneficent action of the American Express Company is seen in the improved appearance of Joe Kintzley. No longer under the severe strain of night work, care and responsibility, his health and personal appearance have visibly improved, and he seems to have taken a new lease of life. Thus a "pension case" was settled by the investigation of one fair man, and something quicker than the average of those which go up to Washington. It is not a large *honorarium* for a lifetime of such laborious service, but it places this faithful servant above the reach of want, and will enable him to spend his remaining days in ease and comfort. All honor to the American Express Company for this good example.

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